



Lillian S. Bruce

SUMMARY OF
CANADIAN HISTORY
IN RHYME

—BY—

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Summary of CANADIAN HISTORY IN FIVE PERIODS



FIRST PERIOD—1497 TO 1759

1497—John Cabot and son Sebastian, Fourteen-ninety-seven, came
From the Port of Bristol, England, in King Henry Seventh's name ;
First they sighted "Prima Vista," as they called the "New Found
Land,"

With its rocks and gloomy forests and its mighty bank of sand ;
After that Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and N.B.,
Which the French, a few years later, called "The Land of Acadie,"

1500—Three years after Cortereal crossed the ocean's wide expanse ;

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- 1524—Then the French sent Verazzani, and he called the land " New France." Ten years after, from St. Malo, came Jacques Cartier to explore,
- 1534—Found and named the Gulf St. Lawrence, Fifteen-hundred-thirty-four. One year later this bold sailor up the river took his way,
- 1535—Looking for a route to China, and discovered Canada.
Where the mighty river narrows—Indians call a Strait " kepec"—
Stood a village, Stadacona, where is standing now Quebec.
What, in English, we call "village" Indians called a "kannata":
Cartier thought they meant the "country," so he called it "Canada."
Next he came to Hochelaga, neatly built of logs, but small,
On a large and fertile island which is now called Montreal:
Near the village stood a mountain, "Royal Mont" he called its name;
Long years after, Sixteen-'leven, rose the city called the same.
- 1541—Cartier founded Charlesburg Royal, Fifteen-hundred-forty-one;
And the first attempt to settle on St. Lawrence was begun.
- 1583—Humphrey Gilbert sailed from London, Fifteen-hundred-eighty-three,
Came to claim the land for England, but his ship was lost at sea.
So the French still held the country, sending rulers one by one,
But the Indians being hostile little settlement was done.

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- 1608—Champlain founded Quebec City, Sixteen-eight, the first real gain,
Here, in Thirty-five, was buried, and his ashes still remain.
- 1629—David Kirke, while Champlain governed, seized the Land as England's
due;
- 1632—Sixteen-twenty-nine, he took it, gave it back in Thirty-two.
Frenchman still succeeded Frenchman, as a ruler of the land :
Immigration slowly followed, backward flowed, or seemed to stand.
Our Ontario, all forest at this time, was little known,
And where stand our swarming cities, roamed the savages alone.
France and England, long unfriendly, came at length to open blows,
And, before the war was ended, Canada engaged the foes.
- 1759—First to rise was last to totter—old Quebec was last to fall :
Wolfe without, led on the English ; French, Montcalm, within the wall.
England conquered, France was beaten, Wolfe and Montcalm both
were slain.
Canada thus came to England, and will loyally remain.

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SECOND PERIOD—1759 TO 1792

- 1759—When Quebec and France surrendered on the Plains of Abraham,
English rule was instituted, storm subsided into calm.
France had yielded up the country, part by part to England's claim ;
Some by cession, some by conquest, some by final treaty came.
Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, once Acadia, had been
Ceded by the Utrecht treaty, signed in Seventeen-thirteen ;
France confirmed this by another, Seventeen-forty-eight, Chapelle ;
Both were known as Nova Scotia at the time of which I tell.
- 1763—By a further final treaty, signed at Paris, Sixty-three,
France renounced her claim forever to these lands across the sea,
Save two islands near Newfoundland, left to France by England's wish,
Where her fishermen still gather, land to cure and dry their fish.
Over all one name extended, British North America,
And the names of Upper, Lower, were unknown in Canada.
- 1776—Seventeen-seventy-six, a portion revolted at English rule and rates,
Thirteen Provinces revolted, called themselves United States.
These were eager that Canadians with the Union should come in,

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But they chose to stay with England, and have ever loyal been.

- 1783—After seven years of struggle, Seventeen-hundred-eighty-three,
England yielded up the question, let the colonies go free.
In the States there still resided many men true to England,
These, United Empire Loyalists, soon to us for refuge flew ;
For the States, with cruel hatred (meaner spite was never found),
Seized their lands, and grain, and cattle, burnt their dwellings to the
ground.

Thousands came to us for shelter ; proud is he who now can tell
That his father's father's father was a hunted U.E.L.

- 1784—Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Seventeen-eighty-four were made
Into separate Provinces, but Canada one Province stayed.
Years rolled on, the country prospered, Canada had greater grown ;
York, Toronto, was a village, farther west was better known.
- 1791—By the act of separation, Constitutional, Ninety-one ;
1792—Canada was first divided, Ninety-two ; the period's done.

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THIRD PERIOD—1792 TO 1841

1791—The British Commons, Ninety-one, a bill had carried through,

1792—Known as the Constitutional Act, enforced in Ninety-two.

It made two Canadas of one, an Upper and a Lower,
And gave a Parliament to each ; there had been none before.
This system, representative, was popular ; but a bill
That passed with it, Clergy Reserve, was fraught with future ill.
For English clergy it reserved, in stipends to be paid,
A seventh part of all the lands in U.C. unsurveyed.
This led to furious future strife, for other churches claimed
The land belonged as much to them as to the clergy named.
Both Houses met in Ninety-two, the capitals of the day
Were, one—Quebec, and Newark—one, now called Niagara.

1793—Next year U. C. led freedom's cause, abolished slavery ;

Ten years passed by, and then L.C. did so in Eighteen-three.

1796—In Ninety-six our capital was taken from Newark

To what is now Toronto ; then 'twas " Dirty Little York."

1804—The population, Eighteen-four, of Upper Canada

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Was sixty thousand, not the third Toronto has to-day.

Old England claimed the "Right of Search," made her intention known
To search and take from Yankee ships deserters from her own,
And said, that while she fought the French, 'twas not a friendly thing
For Yankee ships to trade with France, and aid and comfort bring.

1812—This led to war in Eighteen-twelve, and many men were slain
At Queenston Heights, at Chrysler's Farm, LaColle and Lundy's Lane,
At Chippewa, at Stoney Creek, Fort Erie, Chateauguay—

1815—Eighteen-fifteen, at New Orleans, the Yankees won the day.
But in those ante-steamboat times, pre-teleggraphic days,
Peace had been signed, two weeks or more, before this fight took place.
The war now past, gave people time to clear, and build, and sow,
To dig canals and make good roads, and prosperously grow.
But friction here and faction there caused many an anxious fear,
While stormy times in politics grew worse from year to year.

1835—From Thirty-five to Thirty-nine, throughout the whole extent
Of Canada, rebellion leagued with brooding discontent,
The French and English, Lower C., had quarrels by the score:
The "Family Compact," Upper C., caused full as many more.

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The clergy act of Ninety-one, which Colborne put in force,
1836—While Governor, in Thirty-six, caused bitterness of course.
1837—At length Mackenzie, Thirty-seven, our capital assailed ;
 But he was forced to flee for life, and his rebellion failed.
 Some “Yankee sympathizers” sought to aid the fallen chief ;
 Then England took the matter up, with hope to bring relief,
1840—And Eighteen-forty passed a bill the union to restore ;
 Two Canadas were joined in one as they had been before ;
 The Government “responsible” to Parliament to be.
1841—This took effect in Forty-one, and ended Period Three.

FOURTH PERIOD—1840 TO 1867

1841—Kingston became the capital of both the Canadas ;
Good laws were made, but jealousies revived in various ways.
The Eighteen-forty union act was hardly full in force
Before the wedded Provinces were clamoring for divorce.

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Each Province could, to Parliament, elect just forty-two,
And this caused bitterness and strife as population grew ;
For soon C. West outran C. East, by thousands, till the cry
Of "Rep. by Pop" as it was called, grew furious by and by.
Lord Sydenham, t.^{r.} Governor, died from a hunting-fall ;

1844—The capital in Forty-four was moved to Montreal.

The clergy bill of Ninety-one was ever to the fore,
And jealousy and discontent grew daily more and more.
Mackenzie's war, some years before, much loss to many made ;
These now demanded that their claims by Government be paid.
And when, in Elgin's time, a bill was passed to pay the score,
The smouldering fire of party strife was kindled to a roar.
The Opposition threatened war, disasters great and small ;
Toronto had some rioting, but more had Montreal.

The malcontents mobbed Elgin there, which caused him to resign,

1849—And burnt the House of Parliament in Eighteen-forty-nine.

Lord Elgin, at the Queen's request, still as our ruler stayed ;
Toronto and Quebec, by turns, the capital was made,

1854—At last the clergy lands were sold ; each municipal board

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Received a share for public use, to spend, or loan or hoard.

1858—In Fifty-eight the capital took up the march again;

The Queen selected Ottawa—there may it long remain.

While times were hard, and politics still rougher ran

1861—The Yankee war of Sixty-one and “Fenian Fears” began.

1866—The Fenian horde, in Sixty-six, invaded Canada,

But fled before our volunteers—at Erie and Ridgeway.

George Brown, M.P., Toronto Globe, six years before, had made,

In Parliament, a motion that the motherland be prayed

To join in one her Provinces in North America,

And though it failed to carry then, it served to pave the way.

The Fenian raids, old Rep. by Pop., the French and English feud,

Now, each contributed a share to move the multitude;

New Brunswick had her troubles had, and Nova Scotia, too;

Confederate for self-defence seemed just the thing to do.

1867—Feb., Sixty-seven, the 28th, Confederation’s plan

Was passed by England; loftier aims and broader life began.

This marks the close of Period Four, and with it passed away

Old systems; next July, the first, was first Dominion Day.

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FIFTH PERIOD—1867 TO 1897

- 1867—In July of Sixty-seven, party strife was laid aside,
Four old Provinces united and a new Dominion tried.
By the B.N.A. enactment Canada was twain once more;
Nova Scotia and New Brunswick with these two made up the four.
Upper Canada, re-christened, now Ontario became;
Lower C. rejuvenated with its ancient city's name;
House of Commons for the nation, federal laws to formulate;
Local Houses in each Province, for affairs of lesser state;
Ottawa, the seat of power, for Confederate Canada;
Monck, Dominion Governor-General; first July Dominion Day.
Thus we grew to be a nation, thus our banner was unfurled,
Thus we took a favored station with the peoples of the world.
- 1869—Riel had raised an insurrection in the north in Sixty-nine.
But was fain to flee for safety past the Yankee border ... e.
- 1870—Eighteen-seventy, "Red River," to its interests alive,
Under name of Manitoba joined the union, number five.
- 1871—B. Columbia and Vancouver made a sixth in Seventy-one,

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- 1873—Seventh came Prince Edward Island, Seventy-three ; the list is done.
North and west are Territories, boundless prairies, beds of coal,
Gold and silver, rolling rivers, Canada includes the whole :
All except a single Province, Newfoundland ; some future day
She will claim confederation with the rest of Canada.
- 1875—Franchise act for the Dominion, Seventy-five, new rights conveyed,
And for federal elections uniform provisions made.
- 1879—Eighteen-seventy-nine, the Commons passed the N.P. tariff bill
Which, with many readjustments, is the customs tariff still.
- 1885—Eighty-five, some Indian half-breeds, Manitoba, grew afraid
Government would seize their holdings, and an insurrection made.
Louis Riel became their leader, many volunteers were slain,
Riel was captured, executed, quietness returned again.
- 1886—Eighty-six, the C.P. Railway finished laying iron bands
From the rock-ribbed old Atlantic to Pacific's golden sands.
These have governed the dominion in the name of England's Queen :
- 1897—Lisgar, Dufferin, the Marquis, Lansdowne, Stanley, Aberdeen.
Ye who read a nation's progress in the records of the past,
Estimate our future greatness from the coming shadow cast.

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We have lakes as broad as oceans, boundless forests, meadows, grain,
Fleets of ships and rolling rivers to convey it to the main ;
We have springs of healing waters, we have everduring rills,
That encircle in the journey half a thousand happy hills.
Tell the oppressed of every nation, him that digs and him that delves,
If they'll cast their lot among us, we will make them like ourselves.
For the west will grow a garden, and its brightness be unfurled,
Till its beauty is a byword with the people of the world,
While the East shall build us shipping that shall whiten every sea,
And the boast of this Dominion shall be British liberty.

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